

Washington, DC - Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today voted to pass a bill that provides \$8.1 billion in additional disaster relief and recovery funding to help individuals and local communities hit with flooding and other natural disasters. The deal struck by U.S. House and Senate leaders will provide \$6.4 billion for the FEMA Disaster Relief Fund (DRF), which provides direct relief to those affected by natural disasters. An additional \$1.7 billion in funding for disaster recovery assistance has been secured for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which will help repair damage to infrastructure and prepare for future disaster events. Hinchey voted against a separate bill to offset the disaster relief funding with across the board cuts to all federal government agencies. That bill received unanimous support from U.S. House Republicans.

"Congress waited far too long to approve comprehensive disaster relief funding, but the good news is that adequate funding will be available for farmers, families and businesses who are still struggling to overcome the challenges created by Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee," said Hinchey. "This holiday season, we cannot forget that many of our neighbors have lost their homes and livelihoods as a result of these natural disasters and they still need a lot of help. I'm going to continue working to ensure that New Yorkers receive the reimbursements and other aid they are owed. If anyone is continuing to have trouble with the many federal relief programs that are available, I urge them to contact my office today. I'll do everything I can to help."

Hinchey has been lobbying his colleagues for months to secure additional disaster relief funding after House leaders refused to allow an up or down vote on a bipartisan comprehensive disaster relief bill, which passed the Senate. In November, Hinchey announced that \$2.63 billion would be provided in the first group of 2012 appropriations bills. This funding was the result of a compromise between the Democratic-led Senate, which supported higher funding, and the Republican-led House, which supported less funding. The \$2.63 billion was divided between multiple federal relief and recovery programs including those administered by the Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Federal Highway Administration's and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.